

Citizens Coordinating Council
Meeting Highlights
November 3, 2004

The Citizens Coordinating Council for the Site (CCC) met Wednesday, November 3, 2004, at Berkshire Community College. Approximately 25 people were in attendance. Below are the highlights. Please let me know at 617-918-1028 if you have questions or comments about the meeting highlights.

Jim Murphy facilitated the meeting in the absence of Angela Bonarrigo.

Updates:

1.5 Mile Reach: Dean Tagliaferro reported:

- The project has proceeded down to Dawes Avenue, and 58-60% of the project by length has been completed.

- Approximately 53,000 cubic yards of bank soil and sediments have been removed, out of an overall estimated total of 100,000 cubic yards.

- EPA has extended the 54-inch pipes for the gravity bypass system 400 feet more downstream, and will be entering a segment of the River bordered by residential neighborhoods. EPA will try to complete 400 feet more of the River by the holidays.

Rest of River Project: Dean Tagliaferro reported:

Ecological Risk Assessment

- EPA estimates that, by mid-November 2004, it will release to the public for comment new information related to the Ecological Risk Assessment (ERA).

[Update - EPA released the new information for public comment on Nov. 15th.]

In response to CCC requests for a public forum to discuss the new information, Susan Svirskey of EPA will provide an overview and have questions and answers at the December 1st CCC meeting.

- The CCC also requested having a method of easily identifying what portions of the ERA represent new information. Tim C. said EPA would look into that.

[Update - With its 11/15 release of new information for public comment, EPA attached a list of changes/additions to the ERA.]

-Tim G. mentioned potential issues with the Technical Assistance contract in having Peter DeFur review the new information. Dean said he would check on it with Art Wing of EPA.
[Update - Art Wing of EPA responded to Tim G. on 11/12/04.]

-The CCC also expressed concern about a 30-day comment period around the holidays. EPA said it would adjust the dates or duration of the comment period, if necessary, to provide adequate time for citizen review of the risk assessment during the holiday period.

Modeling Calibration Report

-The Report is scheduled to be released in late December, with public comments to be sent to the Peer Review Panel.

Human Health Risk Assessment

-The new information for the Human Health Risk Assessment (HHRA), in response to the Peer Review comments, is scheduled to be released some time in February for public comment.

National Pollutant Discharge Elimination Permit: Dean Tagliaferro reported.

-The draft permit is undergoing internal review at EPA. The contact person at EPA is Roger Janson, 617-918-1621.

-The CCC asked about sampling data in the River from the Upper Mile Reach downstream that would indicate whether or not the remediated areas are being recontaminated. They also asked for data for the outfalls that discharge into this section of the River. Dean will compile a set of data consisting of post-excavation sediment samples and surface water sampling and present this to the CCC. Either Dean or EPA Permit personnel will summarize the outfall sampling data and relay this information to the CCC.

Fill Program: Dick Gates of GE reported.

Residential: 175 properties have been remediated, 1 this year, and 2 new properties are to be remediated next year. GE is sampling 1 new property next week, and will soon sample an undeveloped area that has 4 parcels.

Commercial: Dalton Avenue, GE believes sampling is complete, and has submitted it to DEP; Commercial Street, GE has proposed supplemental sampling to DEP.

Consent Decree Sites:

-Newell Street Area 1: All properties remediated except two that had access issues. Those will be remediated next spring.

-Newell Street Area 2: GE has submitted a conceptual removal design plan, and would like to start cleanup in spring 05.

-Other Oxbow Sites are transitioning into design model with some construction work next construction season.

-Floodplain properties - in Phase III there are 28 residential properties between Dawes Avenue and Pomeroy - supplemental sampling is to be done in the winter so GE can start on remediation next spring/summer. For Phase IV, GE has submitted sampling plans.

The CCC asked about obtaining sampling information from GE regarding residential fill properties. After discussion, GE said it would consider the request. Regarding the Commercial Street properties, GE provided information that semi-volatile organic constituents were found in the 10-30 ppm PCBs range.

Redevelopment/Demolition: John Novotny of GE reported.

- 40's complex, GE working on pre-demolition work, including asbestos abatement.

- Building 61 is down, Buildings 62 and 66 will be down by the end of the year.

The group discussed testing of underground infiltration, sampling of outfall discharges, and along near utility pipes. DEP and EPA explained that certain items are covered by the NPDES permit, and some by the Decree or state Administrative Consent Order.

Natural Resource Trustee Report: Dale Young reported.

The Massachusetts Trustee SubCouncil (MA SubCouncil) is developing a Restoration Plan for the Housatonic River watershed in Massachusetts to compensate for harm to natural resources associated with PCB contamination in the Housatonic River. The Plan is funded by an October 2000 settlement with the General Electric Company. A series of public meetings will be held at several locations in the Housatonic River watershed to solicit public input during the process.

The first Public Meeting was held October 25, 2004, @ Lee Town Library to present the "Draft Restoration Planning Strategy" prepared by the MASubCouncil. The document provides a framework for planning and implementing restoration actions as part of the Housatonic River Restoration process for Massachusetts. Public comments are being accepted thru November 15, 2004.

The next deliverable milestone is a Draft Restoration Project Evaluation Criteria (DRPEC) document scheduled to be released to the public on November 30, 2004, for review and comment.

The next MA SubCouncil Public Meeting is scheduled for December 16, 2004, at the Pittsfield Athenaeum. Public comments on the DRPEC will be accepted at the meeting and taken in writing from members of the public who are not able to attend.

More information about this restoration initiative and future meeting dates is available online at <http://www.ma-housatonicrestoration.org>.

Berkshire Athenaeum Documents. Tim C. led discussion.

- EPA and DEP will continue to ensure that the public has ready access to all documents related to the Site. But, the Athenaeum is experiencing a significant crunch of not enough space for all the Site-related documents. At present, the Site-related documents go back decades and take up considerable shelving space.

To meet these competing needs, EPA and DEP have reviewed their files at the Athenaeum, and will do the following at the Athenaeum:

- EPA will take off the shelves a great majority of Site-related documents prior to the 1997 negotiations which yielded the 2000 Decree;
- DEP will take off the shelves all reports associated with residential fill properties where a final report has been submitted. The final report will remain, but all those documents preceding the final report will be removed. This will be an ongoing process as final reports are submitted.
- EPA has placed with the Site files an index of Site-related documents which cannot be found in hard copy at the Athenaeum, and instructions on where citizens can obtain such documents from EPA or DEP. A copy of the index will also be able to be found on EPAs website, www.epa.gov/ne/ge.
- EPA has placed with the Site files a description of the EPA website for the Site, with instructions on how to obtain Site-related documents or other information from the website.
- Going forward, Site-related documents will continue to be placed at the Athenaeum, with many documents being transmitted via paper copy. An exception would be GE monthly reports, which are large and which include information which will also be included in another report, and which will be transmitted by CD.
- Tim also mentioned other locations where citizens can obtain Site-related information.
 - EPAs website, www.epa.gov/ne/ge.
 - EPA and DEP each have a full set of site documents at their offices in Boston and Springfield, respectively. To obtain documents from these offices, citizens should notify the EPA/DEP in advance to set up an appointment. This will ensure that the requested files will be available for review at the time of a visit. The contacts are as follows:
 - for EPA, contact the EPA Records Center, 617-918-1440;
 - for DEP, contact Kellie Loftus at the Springfield office, 413-755-2268. Every Wednesday is an open public file review day at the Springfield office, and all arrangements are to be made through Kellie Loftus. Also, DEP is evaluating the possibility of making documents available at their outreach office upon request.
 - Per the CCC request from the September meeting, EPA looked into using the Silvio Conte records archives in Pittsfield. Unfortunately, it will not meet the Site needs because it is not open for public record viewing, and is not for storing extra copies of documents also available elsewhere. Since EPA already has a contract with a similar records archive in Waltham, MA, changing to the Conte archives would not be practical.

-On another document-related issue, Tim mentioned that for the Rest of River portion of the Site, EPA is currently establishing an administrative record for eventual remedial decision making. EPA will be setting up a public administrative record room at EPAs offices at 10 Lyman Street, in addition to making the administrative record documents available at the EPA office in Boston. At the time EPA makes a proposal regarding Rest

of River remedial action, EPA will also endeavor to make Rest of River administrative record documents available at other repository locations.

Other records-related discussion ensued.

-EPA will consider HRI's request to be the recipient of the documents that EPA is taking off the shelves at the Athenaeum.

[Update - HRI has requested that they receive the hard copies of documents that are proposed to be removed from the Berkshire Athenaeum. If no one objects, via email to Angela Bonarrigo (bonarrigo.angela@epa.gov) by December 3, 2004, EPA will provide HRI with the hard copies of documents that are to be removed from the Berkshire Athenaeum, which would otherwise have been discarded.]

-EPA will consider a CCC request for EPA to make a copier available in the Rest of River administrative records room. *[Update - EPA is checking.]*

-EPA will consider a request by two CCC members who volunteered to help Cornwall Library shelve site related documents.

[Update - the two CCC members are volunteering directly for the Cornwall Library.]

Silver Lake: December 2004 Presentation: The group discussed the upcoming presentation at the December CCC meeting. EPA agreed to get the word out to the public, with a flyer and/or press release.

[Update - EPA's flyer and press release are to be issued the week of 11/22.]

Newsletter: Judy reiterated her 9/04 request that EPA do another newsletter - suggested topics were new info on risk assessments, a basic understanding of modeling, PCB 101, NRD updates, and how people can get involved. EPA indicated that it would consider the request in light of the resources involved. The CCC indicated the newsletter need not be as polished as past newsletters.

[Update - EPA is considering the request.]